Tales of India

CHANDRAMATI
AND
DAMAYANTI

EDITED BY
Mrs. SATYANADHAN, M.A.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
MADRAS, BOMBAY, CALCUTTA AND LONDON
1923

FOREWORD

THIS is one of the series of continuous readers entitled *Tales of India*. The aim of this new series is to make Indian children acquainted with the treasury of the interesting myths, legends, and stories of their country. The stories are told in a simple manner and in language which is within the reading capacity and understanding of pupils in the lower forms of schools. There is plenty of bright conversation in them which will help to secure good expression in the reading lessons. These books serve as a basis for oral and written composition. The stories are so presented as to form valuable auxiliaries to character-building.

The publishers gratefully acknowledge their indebtedness to Mr. W. C. Douglas, M.A., Principal, Government Muhammadan College, Madras, who, as a labour of love, kindly read through the manuscript and made the language chaste and simple. Their thanks are also due to Rao Bahadur C. Munuswami Iyer who kindly read through the proofs and offered various suggestions to make the stories true to the original.

MADRAS,
January 5, 1920.

CHANDRAMATI

THE WIFE OF HARISCHANDRA

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNING OF THE TROUBLES

WHAT is the use of woman in this world? We get many answers to a question like this. Some people say that women are as clever as men, and that therefore, women must work by the side of men. This is true in some cases. But all women are not clever. All women cannot work hard. They get so tired. They want some one to work for them. This is particularly true in the case of our Indian women. But all women can look after a home. This has been woman's chief work in the world. Some one must look after the home. Who can do this as well as a woman? She can see to it that the house is kept clean. She can get all the work in it properly done. She can look after the children, and make them bright and happy. But can she do nothing else? Is she only to be a sort of housekeeper? Not at all. She can do much more. She must first educate herself, and learn many things. This will enable her to train her children. Children generally learn things very easily. Their mothers can teach them to grow up good.

Women can do even more than this. They can help the grown-up people around them. They can help their husbands, brothers and sons, and can advise them in their troubles. They can teach them to do their duty. They can correct them when they are wrong. They can make themselves loved by all. Is not this a great work for women? There are many sweet women of this kind. Our Indian women especially can be like this.

Chandramati, the wife of Harischandra, is well known to Indians. She was a great and a good woman.

There are some things we must notice about her. She was a true wife to her husband. She never left him in any trouble. Indian wives are well known for their devotion to their husbands. Indeed, this is just what is wanted in Indian women. Beauty is not wanted much; cleverness is not much needed. Wives must love their husbands. Then again, the story of Harischandra is a story of a man who loved truth. People tried to make Harischandra tell a lie, but he was always truthful. His wife loved truth just as much as he. She helped her husband to be truthful. She was never afraid of any trouble. She never lost courage. She always helped her husband and son to be brave.

Thousands of years ago, the gods, so says a Hindu story, met in council one day. In their midst was Indra, the God of Heaven. With them were many *rishis* or holy men. These holy men themselves were like gods. They could bless people; they could curse people: and their blessing and curses would come true. Among these *rishis* there were three chief ones: Narada, Vasishta, and Viswamitra. Narada suddenly said: 'Can any man always speak the truth? Show me one who can.'

Vasishta then said: 'I am the priest of the kings of the solar race. Harischandra, the present king, never tells a lie. He always speaks the truth.'

Then Viswamitra said: 'He is a great king. He has all power. He has great riches. He can get whatever he wants. He has no troubles. Therefore, he can always speak the truth. But make him poor. Take away his kingdom. Fill his life with troubles. Then he will certainly not always be truthful.'

'Even then, he will be true to his word,' said Vasishta.

'I am sure he will not,' cried Viswamitra,

'You can try him,' said Vasishta, 'place him in any trouble you like. He will still be truthful.'

'I shall make him tell a lie,' said Viswamitra. 'If not I shall punish myself. I shall give him half of my holy power. I shall give him long life. He shall rule for fourteen great ages. And when he dies, I shall give him half of the kingdom of Indra, the God of Heaven.'

Let us now turn to King Harischandra. He was the King of Ayodhya. His wife was called Chandramati. They had a son named Lohitasya. Harischandra was one day offering a great sacrifice. Many great people had come to his city. Powerful kings and holy *rishis* were there. There were brave warriors and great poets. Wonderful musicians played sweet music. It was like a city of Heaven. The king was very kind to all and he was loved by his people. He now gave grand presents to every one. Even gods and *rishis* accepted presents from him. In return, they blessed him with long life and happiness.

Viswamitra thought this a good time for his plans. He came to Harischandra and asked him for a boon. The good king told him to ask for anything he wanted. Then Viswamitra said: 'O king! I am going to offer a big sacrifice. I need money for it. Now, what I ask for is this: make a man stand on an elephant, let him throw up a jewel and see how high the jewel goes. Then give me a heap of money as high as the height to which the jewel goes.'

The king was a man of great generosity. Besides, he must not refuse anything to a *rishi*: So he gave the money to Viswamitra. But the cunning *rishi* said: 'I do not want the money now. Keep it till I ask for it. I can trust you.' Harischandra consented to this and the *rishi* went away.

But Viswamitra did not leave Harischandra in peace. He, like other *rishis*, was very powerful. So he created many wild animals and made them do much damage to the rich country of Harischandra. Then Harischandra's subjects came to him and complained bitterly of their troubles. The king promised to help them. So accompanied by his wife, whom he would never leave behind, he set out to hunt the wild animals. He hunted all over his great kingdom. During the hunt he came to the place where Vasishta lived. Now Vasishta was his family priest. Therefore he said to the king: 'O king! why trouble yourself? Cannot your hunters do this work? Why waste your time? Go home. Do not go to the place where Viswamitra lives. Be very careful. If you go there, you will get into trouble.'

So the king turned back. But Viswamitra was determined to oust him. He created a beautiful golden deer. Harischandra saw this deer and chased it. It fled for many miles

until at last it came to Viswamitra's abode. There the king hit it with an arrow. But the deer was not hurt, and it continued to run. It was very dark, and the king was tired. So he laid his head down on his wife's lap and slept. Then he dreamt a dreadful dream, and started up from his sleep. Chandramati asked him what the matter was. He said: 'I dreamt that a Brahmana came and kicked me. He threw my crown down. He took me by the hair. He drove me out of my kingdom. I am much troubled by this dream. Even now my limbs are shaking.'

In her heart, Chandramati was frightened. She knew some evil would come from Viswamitra. But Chandramati was brave. She hid her fear and said bravely:

'Oh, my lord! do not be afraid. Why believe in dreams? Your mind is troubled; you are very tired. Vasishta's words about Viswamitra have troubled you. Therefore you dream. Do not be afraid.'

Just then two girls appeared. Now these girls had been created by Viswamitra. They were low-caste girls. Their hearts were very bad, but their faces were very beautiful. They shone like the moon. They sang some pretty songs to the king. He was very pleased and gave them some jewels. They refused them, saying:

'O king! what is the use of jewels to hungry people?'

The king said: 'I have no food here. Sell the jewels in the town and buy food.'

They cried out: 'We are not hungry in our bodies. We are hungry in our minds. We want proper husbands.'

Then the king was angry and said: 'Your talk is not at all good. You are people of low caste. Your words show your birth. Please get away.'

Then they answered: 'It is true we are of low birth. But we are well educated. We are very beautiful. We ask you to marry us. What does caste matter? Can you get more beauty anywhere else? Be brave and marry us.'

But he said: 'I have made a vow to have only one wife. I cannot marry you.'

Yet they came nearer to him. He pushed them away with his cane. He did not beat them. But they began to cry aloud: 'The king has beaten us. The king has beaten two poor women.' They pulled their hair, they tore their clothes. They ran to Viswamitra and told him all this.

Viswamitra grew very angry. His eyes became red. He ran to the king and kicked away his crown. But the king thought to himself: 'A good man never loses his temper.

There is no use in being angry with an angry man. A soft answer is the best medicine.' So he said to the *rishi*:—' O holy man! what have I done to make you angry with me? I must have done something. If not, why do you behave like this? I am glad you have punished me. Fathers should punish their children, and I am like your child. Tell me my fault. I have only one fear. I fear your foot was hurt by my hard crown. I hope it is not so.'

Then Viswamitra said: 'You have not hurt my foot. You have hurt my feelings. What has my pet deer done to you? You have hurt it. Why should you hunt the animals of *rishis*? Your army has spoilt my whole place. You have done still greater harm than this. My dear daughters came humbly to you. You were rude to them. You have beaten them. A brave man never beats a woman. You are a coward. You are not a real king. I shall burn you to ashes in my anger.'

But still the king was meek and said: 'I am your child. Do not be angry with me. Forgive me.'

'I shall forgive you on one condition,' said the *rishi*: 'You must do as I wish. Marry my daughters.'

But the king refused: 'I have a wife. I cannot marry again. Besides, I must not marry low-caste girls.'

Viswamitra coaxed him in many ways. But still the king was firm. At last the *rishi* said: 'The girls can get many husbands. Though they are of low caste, yet many want to marry them. But I want them to be queens. I want them to have royal comforts. That is why I want you to marry them.'

The king said: 'In that case you can have my kingdom. But marry them, I cannot.'

Viswamitra took him at his word at once and said: 'Very well, give me the kingdom.'

'Are you joking with me ?' asked the king.

'Ah!' said Viswamitra. 'I see you want to break your promise. Very well! Take back your kingdom. But you must tell a lie first. Take back your word about your kingdom.'

'I will tell no lie,' said the king. 'You can have my kingdom.'

'Well done!' said the *rishi*. 'I see you are really a great man. But I must ask you for one thing more. I want jewels for my daughters. Give me all your jewels. Ask your wife and son to give me all their jewels.'

The king did so. Even his little son gave away his jewels. You must notice one thing here. The boy was not sorry to give away his jewels. He had received a good training from his mother and was a good boy. But he was also a wise boy and said:

'This Brahmana is never content. He is always asking for more. So he will come to harm.'

After this, the *rishi* turned to go away.

Suddenly he turned back and said : 'O Harischandra! I forgot one thing. Where is the money you once gave me as a present? I want it now.'

How could the poor king give the money? All his money now belonged to the *rishi.* But the *rishi* would not listen. He must have the money. If he did not get the money the king was a liar.

Now we see what a good woman Chandramati was. She said : 'O my lord! this holy man wants you to tell a lie. Do not listen to him. Ask him for a month's time. In that month, we shall somehow raise the money. If not, he can sell us and take the money.'

Harischandra did so, and Viswamitra gave him a month to collect the money. But he told the king to leave the kingdom. He must not stay anywhere in the kingdom. 'Very well,' said the king. But the *rishi* was not content. He said :

'How can I trust you? You are now a poor man. You will spend any money you get. I have with me a Brahmana pupil called Nakshatraka. I shall send him with you. He shall take care of the money. But be very kind to him. I love him very much. He is a weak man, and cannot bear hardship. He must have good and timely food and sleep.'

Then he whispered something to Nakshatraka and sent him away. So Nakshatraka and Harischandra and his wife and son started to Kasi.

CHAPTER II

ON THE WAY TO KASI

VISWAMITRA, however, made himself invisible and went with the king. He made the road very hard. Big stones came in their way. The path was full of thorny bushes. They had to cross wide ditches. Little or no water could be had on the way to drink. The sun was very hot. Poor Chandramati and her son Lohitasya were much fatigued. But they were brave. They did not complain. On the other hand, they helped Nakshatraka, for he gave them much trouble. After going a few yards he would say: 'My feet are full of thorns. I cannot walk. Carry me.'

Then the king would carry him. But the Brahmana would shout: 'You are carrying me very awkwardly, and I am afraid you will throw me down. Put me down at once.' He would not let them walk slowly. If they walked a few yards ahead of him, he would say: 'You are leaving me behind. A tiger will carry me away.'

If they lagged a little behind, he would tell them: 'I am not your servant. Only servants go in front.'

He would often ask for food. No fruit satisfied him. Sometimes he would say it was too ripe; sometimes it was too unripe. He would

want water, but he would not drink it from the king's hands: 'I am a Brahmana. You are of a lower caste. How can I drink water from your hands?'

Then they would walk on. But he would cry: 'O! I am dying of thirst. Can you not bring me water?'

'But you refused to drink from my hands,' the king would say: 'O, you are a fool,' the Brahmana would retort. 'I am dying. How can I think of caste?'

But the king and his wife endured and did not grumble. They were kind to Nakshatraka. Viswamitra, who was still following them, saw their courage, and thought to himself:

'I shall never succeed in getting them to tell an untruth. They will somehow get the money. I shall be put to shame. Let me try and kill them.'

So he called to him a *rakshasa*, who is a sort of a devil, and told the *rakshasa* to dress like a *rishi*. 'Stand in the king's way,' he said. 'He will come in this direction. Then send him to where there are many devils like yourself.'

Now Nakshatraka pretended to faint for lack of water. Then Chandramati said to Harischandra 'Go and look for water. The Brahmana cannot walk. I shall attend on him. I am not afraid of anything.'

So the king went in search of water. On his way he met the *rakshasa* and thought him a holy man. He asked the *rakshasa* where he could get water and was told to go a little farther—until he came to a banyan tree; there he would find water. By this time it was getting dark. Night came on. Harischandra's wife and son and the Brahmana slept under the banyan tree. But the king kept watch. In the middle of the night, many devils came down from the tree. Harischandra, however, was not afraid. He threw himself on them, and cut off the ears and hands of some of them. Then the king of these devils, Bethala, came himself to where Harischandra was. Viswamitra had expected that Bethala would kill the king. But the king beat the devil and killed him. This made Viswamitra very angry and he sent a big storm. Strong winds blew: heavy rain fell. The poor wanderers shivered with cold. Yet they did not die. At last, morning came and the storm abated. Then the king and his party started again.

CHAPTER III

THE SEPARATION

NOW we come to Chandramati's part in the story. Viswamitra started a big fire in the forest. When the fire was creeping all round them, the king asked Nakshatraka to run away. Why should he also be burnt? But the Brahmana said:

'I know you want to send me away. You wish to run away from me. What about my master's money? I will not leave you. You must save me from the fire.'

Then Chandramati said: 'Oh, king! do not be vexed. This man is half-mad. He does not understand what he says. Listen to me. I shall go and throw myself in the fire. Then the fire god will be appeased. He will take away the fire, and you will be saved.'

You must notice her goodness here, children. She did not care for her own life. She only wished to save her dear ones. But Harischandra said: 'How can I let you go? If you die, my life will be a burden to me. What will your child do without you? How can I allow you to die for me? I must die for you.'

But Chandramati was a wise woman. She said: 'O, king! you are a speaker of truth. Your words will always come true. Your blessings

will come true. Bless me with long life. Then the fire cannot kill me. Instead, I shall save you all.'

See what trust she had in her husband. She knew what a great man he was. So Harischandra blessed her. Then his wife went to the fire. Was she afraid of the leaping flames? Was she afraid of the fire-god? Not at all. She said to him: 'O God! you are the real God of all things. Everything must obey you. You know I am a true wife. Save me. Then I shall know I am a good wife. Save my husband from speaking lies. Let him do his duty faithfully.'

Then bravely she threw herself into the fire. But she was not burnt. On the other hand, the fire was all put out. And Chandramati returned safely to her husband.

We must notice here the power of a true wife. In those days, a good and true wife could do anything. All the gods would help her. She could come to no harm. She could bless and she could curse. She was really like a goddess. This was all the result of her true wifehood.

But their troubles were not over. Viswamitra hit upon a new plan. He tried to separate Chandramati from her husband. Then he could make the king tell an untruth. So he spoke to Nakshatraka. One day, Nakshatraka came to Chandramati and said:

'O lady! why do you also suffer? It is your husband who owes the money. You have nothing to do with it. Did he get permission from you to give away the money? Why then should you suffer? Do not trust your husband. One day he will sell you and your son. So leave him in the forest. Come with me. We shall go to Ayodhya. There you can fall at Viswamitra's feet. He will give back the kingdom to your son. Then you can be happy. Let your husband go.'

What do you think Chandramati said in reply? She was very angry with Nakshatraka:

'Do not speak to me like that. O, Brahmana! You are mad. How can a wife part company with a husband? He is her whole life. Without him she is nothing. Have you ever seen moonlight without the moon? Do not speak like that again, or I shall curse you.'

After this, they continued their journey. At last they came to Benares, and as they bathed in the holy river, they prayed to God to help them. Now Viswamitra had given the king only a month's time, and this was nearly over. Only one day was left. How could they get the money? Nakshatraka said: 'O king! to-morrow the month will be over. What shall I do? I am in charge of you. Viswamitra will ask me for the money, and if I do not get him the money, he will curse me. My life will be ruined. Why do you treat a Brahmana like this? Your are a very cruel man.'

Then Chandramati said: 'O Brahmana! do not speak such words. Sell us to-morrow. Then you can get the money.'

Then she said to her husband: 'O husband! the Brahmana will sell us to some low-caste man. Let us do the selling ourselves. Please sell me, and give the money to Viswamitra. After that, you can earn some money. Then you can buy me back.'

Was she not a good woman? But Harischandra was very much distressed. He wept bitter tears, and said:

'How can I sell you? A husband should not sell even his wife's jewels. How can he sell her? Alas! alas! My grief is greater than I can bear. Only I am to blame. Why should you suffer for me? I shall sell myself. Then you and Lohitasya can live in comfort.'

But his wife spoke sweetly to him, and said:

'Why do you speak so, my husband? Are not wife and husband one? I belong to you; you belong to me. What is yours is mine. We both must suffer, not you alone. Besides, how can I be without you? If you sell yourself, who is to take care of me? Who is to look after my son? I am only a woman. I cannot buy you back again. I cannot get the money. So I shall be separated from you for ever. This is not the time for sorrow. This Brahmana wants you to tell an untruth. He is giving us all this trouble only for that purpose. We must not tell lies, whatever happens. Truth is truth.'

So she coaxed her husband, and at last he agreed to her proposal. Then he went about the streets crying, 'O people of Benares! I was the King of Ayodhya. I owe money. I am selling my wife in order to get the money. Who will buy her?' Then he began to weep. But Nakshatraka told him to be calm. If he wept, no one would buy his wife.

At last a Brahmana called Kalakausika came to buy the lady. But he was a bad man. He said to Harischandra:

'Who is this woman? I do not see her marriage string.' In those days, only a husband could see a true wife's marriage string. Chandramati was a good wife. So her string could not be seen.

'This is my wife,' said the king.

'Who is to prove it?' asked the Brahmana.

'This Nakshatraka knows it,' was the answer. But Nakshatraka said:

'They call themselves husband and wife. But I never saw their marriage. How can I prove it?'

Then Kalakausika cried: 'O she is a bad woman. She is not your wife. She is not a caste woman. You are telling an untruth. You must go to prison.'

The Brahmana had always been disliked by the people. Now his conduct made them more angry, and the boys all fell on him. They tore

his clothes and pulled his hair and threw sand on him. But Harischandra stopped them. At last Kalakausika bought Chandramati. She was to be his servant. He gave for her all the money that had been promised to Viswamitra. Then Chandramati was overwhelmed with grief at having to leave her husband. She wept and wept. She fell at his feet. But alas! she had to leave him.

Then her son began to follow her, but the king took him in his arms and kissed him. Then the Brahmana said:

'Oho! what business have you to kiss him? He does not belong to you. Send him with me.'

'I did not sell him to you,' said the king.

'With the cow, goes the calf. What can you do with the child? Send him with his mother.' So the boy went with his mother.

Kalakausika's wife was called Kalakanti. She was a bad and cruel woman, and made Chandramati work from morning till late at night. She was always getting angry with her. Chandramati, however, never grumbled, but always obeyed her mistress. Thus a year passed.

What had happened to Harischandra in the meanwhile? After Chandramati was sold, Nakshatraka took all the money. Then he said: 'O king! part of this money will pay the interest on your debt. I shall take the rest as my batta.'

'Interest! Batta! What do you mean?' asked the king.

'Did you think my master gave you the money for nothing? You must pay him interest on it. And did you think I came with you for nothing? Where is my daily batta? Did you think I was your peon? What a fine king you are!'

Harischandra was too distressed to talk more. He told Nakshatraka to sell him and give the money to his master. So the Brahmana tied a rope round the king's neck. He led him up and down the town and asked people to buy him. Then a low-caste man came forward. His clothes were ragged. His body was black as charcoal and he was very dirty. He was carrying baskets of meat. He offered money for Harischandra. The king begged Nakshatraka not to sell him to such a man.

'Will you do what I ask you?' asked Nakshatraka.

'Yes,' said the king.

'Then, you will serve this man. If you do not, you will have told a lie. Which will you do?'

The king, of course, agreed to be sold. But the gods gave him a boon. As the king would not eat food from a low-caste man, they saved

him from the pangs of hunger and thirst. Thus he needed no food or drink from his master.

Harischandra's master was called Virabahu. He made the king do all sorts of dirty work. He made him kill cows, and carry meat. He made him carry toddy. But Harischandra, like his wife, never grumbled. He was now happy because of one thing. His debt had been paid. He owed nothing to Viswamitra. One day his master wanted to test him. He told Harischandra to rub his legs. Virabahu pretended to sleep, but he was awake and watched to see whether the king would do what he was told. The king did not stop for a minute. The whole night he rubbed Virabahu's legs and Virabahu could find no fault with him.

Now Virabahu was merely carrying out Viswamitra's orders. They were trying to make the king do wrong but could not. So they devised a new plan. The king was sent to take care of the burning ghat. Every one who burnt a dead body had to pay a fee. Harischandra was to collect the money and give it to his master.

Harischandra hated the burning ground. Everywhere there were dead bodies burning. Everywhere there were bones. Everywhere people were crying. The air was so full of smoke that he could hardly see through it. But he was patient, and did his duty bravely. And thus a year passed.

CHAPTER IV

TRUTH'S TRIUMPH

KALAKAUSIKA, the Brahmana and his wife were also the servants of Viswamitra. One day the lady saw Lohitasya and said:

'You lazy boy! Why don't you do some work? Must I feed you for nothing? Go and do something. See, those Brahmana boys are going to the forest to gather wood. Go with them and bring firewood.'

Chandramati was greatly distressed to hear this. How could her son go to the jungle? He was a little child. He was only five years old. She wept bitterly. But she told her son to be brave and sent him away.

Now Viswamitra went to the serpent-king, who was his friend, and told him to hide in the jungle. There he was to sting the little boy and kill him.

The serpent hid in an ant-heap under a banyan tree. The boy came to cut the leaves. But as he was too small to reach the tree, he stood on the ant-heap. Out came the serpent and stung him. Lohitasya fell down dead. This was told to Chandramati. Who can describe her sorrow? Lohitasya was her only son. Her husband was not with her. Now her son was gone. Of what use was life to her? Why was she born? What sin had she done in her former life?

So she wept and wept. Then her mistress was angry with her. Chandramati bravely dried her eyes. She asked for pardon, and begged leave to go to her son. But her mistress told her not to go then. She must finish all her work, and at night, after her master and mistress had gone to sleep, she could go.

Chandramati waited till night. Then she was free. It was very dark, but she took a torch. She thought of her husband, and her trust in him made her brave. Then she went to the place where her son lay dead. Her misery knew no bounds. But what was the use of crying? She must burn his body. So she gathered some firewood and took him to the burning ground.

Then she began to cry aloud: 'O! how can I live without my son? And slave as I am, I cannot kill myself. Who will do my work at my master's house? I have been bought for money. I must do my work. If not, I shall not be doing my duty. Besides, I shall not be obeying my husband's order. So I must live.'

Now Harischandra heard her crying. He knew it was some one come to burn a dead body. But the fee had not been paid. He went up to her and said kindly: 'Who are you? Why have you come at night?'

She said: 'I am a poor woman. This is my only son. I have no money. Have pity on me and do not ask for the fee.'



THE BURNING GROUND. FATHER, MOTHER AND THE DEAD SON.

Harischandra was very sorry for her. But how could he excuse her from paying the fee? He must be true to his duty. So he said to her: 'Come in the morning and burn the body. Some one will give you the money before then. You must pay the fee.'

He spoke kindly to her and she told him her story. Harischandra now knew that the woman was his wife. His heart was full of grief. But what could he do? He said to her: 'I am sorry for you. But I cannot excuse you from paying the money. Give me the marriage string that is round your neck.'

At once Chandramati knew that the man was her husband, because only her husband could see her marriage string. She fell at his feet and wept.

'What a state you have come to, my Lord! Is this fit work for a king like you? O king! see, this is our son. We both loved him dearly. But he is dead. A snake bit him.'

Harischandra wept much. But the night was passing, and Chandramati had to return to her work. So she prayed her husband for leave to burn the body. But still he was firm. He must collect the fee. He could not go against his master's order. That would be disobedience. He told her to go home and get the money. Her mistress would give it to her.

So Chandramati started for the house of her mistress. Now Viswamitra called a *rakshasa*

and said to him: 'Put on a man's clothes. Go to the king of this town. Kill his son. Take his jewels and put them into Chandramati's hands.'.

The *rakshasa* did as he was bid. Chandramati met the *rakshasa* on her way home from the burning ground. It was still dark. The *rakshasa* asked her where she was going. She told him her story. Then he said to her: 'O my sister! Do you want money? Here are jewels. Take them and pay for the burning.'

He then ran away. Just then the king's men came looking for the murderer of the king's son. The *rakshasa* joined them. He pointed to Chandramati, and said: 'She is the murderess. She has the jewels.'

They took her to the king. He said: 'A woman who kills a child is not a woman. She is a devil. She is a *rakshasi*. She must be killed before morning. Take her to the burning ground and tell the keeper to kill her.'

She was taken to Virabahu. He sent her to Harischandra to be killed.

Think of it, children. Harischandra was to kill his own wife. Could anything be more fearful?

Harischandra stood like a stone. Tears ran down his face. But his wife comforted him. She said: 'My lord! This is not the time for you to sorrow. I too must not be unhappy. This is a time for you to show your truth. All people must die. I shall die by your hand. What can be better for me? This is a true wife's reward.

Besides this, they say I killed a child. Nothing can be worse than to hear people say that of me. It is better to die than to hear that said. Kill me, my lord!'

Then Harischandra thought to himself: 'Life is but a dream. But truth lives for ever. For the sake of truth I must do my duty. If not, I shall be untrue.'

So he took up his knife to kill Chandramati. Suddenly Viswamitra came and held his hand. 'Stop Harischandra. I thought you were a wise man. I did not know you were so wicked. How can you kill a woman? Have you lost your senses? Who taught you to do this? There can be no worse sin than this. Stop it. Marry my daughters. I shall take away your troubles. I shall give you back your kingdom.'

Then Harischandra laughed and said: 'O *Rishi*! this has nothing to do with you. I have paid your debt. What have you to do with this? Our sin will not hurt you. You are not my family priest. Besides what is done for truth is no sin. I am forced to kill my wife. There is no sin in this. I am doing no wrong. Stand aside.'

Again he lifted up his knife. By this time, Indra, the God of Heaven, himself came and held his hand. Indra's wife was also there.

'Oh Harischandra! All this has been done to try your truth. Even the gods are pleased with you. Well done, O king! You are the

Lord of Truth. Your master is not a low-caste man. He is Yama, the God of Death. Your wife's mistress is Kali. This is not a burning ground. It is a sacrificial ground. You have won. Viswamitra has lost.'

Then the king and his wife fell at their feet. Indra's wife said to Chandramati: 'Your faithfulness has saved you and your husband. I am very pleased with you. Ask for what you want.'

Chandramati asked for the life of the king's son. Indra's wife was greatly pleased and said:

'You have not asked for the life of your own son. This shows your goodness of heart. Your son and the king's son shall both live.'

Then Indra and his wife disappeared. Then Viswamitra said to Harischandra:

'O king! you have won. I have lost. Forgive me. Your fame will live for ever. Take back your kingdom. I am a *rishi*. How can I rule kingdoms?'

The king replied: 'By your grace, I have won fame. You have done me good. You have done me no harm. I thank you. I have given you my kingdom. I cannot take it back. I have enjoyed all its pleasures and sorrows. I do not want it again. Give it to any king you like.'

'You are the king I like,' said Viswamitra, 'Now you must take the kingdom. You told me to give it to whom I like. I give it to you. Take it.'

So Harischandra and his wife and his son went back to their kingdom. Viswamitra kept his word. He made Harischandra rule for fourteen great ages. Then when Harischandra died, Viswamitra gave him half of Indra's kingdom.

What do you think of the story, my children? Do you not all wish to be like Harischandra and his wife? Be always true to your word. Always do your duty, whatever may happen. Never mind troubles; do not be afraid of sorrows. Do not fear death.

ORAL AND WRITTEN EXERCISES.

1. Describe as fully as you can in the form of a conversation the dispute between Vasishta and Viswamitra in the council of the gods.

2. Tell in your own words why Harischandra had to leave his kingdom and go to Kasi.

3. Prepare an outline of the doings of Nakshatraka; write the main points in all that he did on the way to and at Kasi.

4. Describe the troubles of Chandramati from the time she became the servant of Kalakanti. Tell why you consider the latter cruel and bad.

5. Look at the picture on page 26 and write about six short sentences on what you see in it.

6. Harischandra is a 'martyr to truth.' What do you understand by this? Write three short paragraphs to prove this.

DAMAYANTI

THE WIFE OF NALA

CHAPTER I

THE MARRIAGE AND THE SEPARATION

THERE was once a king called Bhima. He was the king of the Vidarbhas. He was a great king and had a huge army and much wealth. He was as learned as he was brave, and was liked by his people. But he had no children. So he prayed to the gods. One day, a great *rishi*, called Damana, came to Vidarbha. Bhima received him and treated him kindly. Damana was very pleased with Bhima's kindness and blessed Bhima and his wife with children. They had a beautiful daughter called Damayanti; and they had three sons, called Dama, Danta and Damana.

Damayanti grew to be a big girl. There was none so beautiful or so good as Damayanti. There was at that time another king, called Nala. He ruled over the Nishadhas. He was a great and good man and he was also handsome. Every one thought Nala and Damayanti should marry each other. Nala heard everybody praising Damayanti. Damayanti heard everybody praising Nala. Nala and Damayanti had not seen each other, yet they fell



DAMAYANTI AND THE SWAN.

in love with each other, and they became love-sick. Nala used to wander about in his gardens. He was always thinking of Damayanti. One day he saw some beautiful swans with golden wings. He caught one of them. The swan said :

'Do not kill me, O king ! Let me go, and I will speak of you to Damayanti. I will praise you to her. And she will want you only to be her husband.'

So Nala freed the swan. Then the birds flew to Vidarbha, and into Damayanti's garden. They found Damayanti there. She was thinking of Nala. She too caught one of the swans. It was the one Nala had caught and it said to her :

' O Damayanti ! there is a king called Nala. There is no one equal to him in beauty or goodness. And there is no one equal to you. So you must marry him. Then only will you both be happy.'

Then Damayanti told the swan to go to Nala and tell him all about her. And the swan did so.

Now, Damayanti became more and more sad. She became pale and thin, and could not sleep. When her maids told her father of this, he thought he would get her married. So he arranged a *swayamvara* and invited all the kings to it. He wanted Damayanti herself to choose a husband from among these kings.

Indra heard of Damayanti's beauty. Agni, the god of fire, Varuna, the god of water, and Yama, the god of death, were his companions.

Each of these wanted to get Damayanti for his wife. So they came down to earth, and started for Vidarbha. On their way they met Nala. They were astonished at his good looks. He was more handsome even than themselves. So they knew it was no use going into the presence of Damayanti along with Nala, as she would certainly prefer him. They asked Nala to do something for them. He said he would. Then they asked him to commend them to Damayanti. They said they were gods, and wanted to marry her, and so Nala must coax Damayanti to choose one of them. Then Nala said: 'How can I do this, O gods? I myself want to marry Damayanti.'

Then they said: 'But, O king! you have already said you would do it. We asked you to do something for us. You said you would. How can you refuse us now?'

Nala was always truthful. So he said he would do what the gods asked. But how was he to enter Damayanti's palace? She would be well guarded. The gods helped him to enter the palace unseen. Then Nala went on until he came to Damayanti's palace. There he saw Damayanti. Her beauty was so great that his love for her increased. Yet he must keep his promise to the gods. Damayanti asked him who he was. He said: 'I am Nala, king of Nishadha. I have brought a message from the gods. Indra, Agni, Varuna and Yama want you for their wife. You must choose one of them.'

But she said : 'O king ! I love only you. I want only you.'

Then he said : 'How can you choose a man when the gods want you. They are great and good. They will give you all that you want. Choose one of them. Do not take me. I shall be blamed by them and they will curse me.'

Then Damayanti said : 'I choose only you, O king ! I shall tell you a way of escape from the difficulty. The gods will not be angry with you. Many kings will come to the *swayamvara*. You shall be among them. I shall choose you there. Then the gods will not blame you.'

Then Nala returned to the gods, and told them all that had happened. At last the day of the *swayamvara* came, and all the kings were gathered. Damayanti entered the hall, and everybody wondered at her beauty. The name of each of the kings was told her. Then she saw five persons, all just like Nala. Which of them was Nala ? She did not know what to do. So she prayed to the gods to help her. She said :

'O ye gods ! I have chosen Nala to be my lord. I love him only. I must marry him. Then only I shall be true to my heart. I pray you to help me. Please show him to me. I know the signs of gods. I know that the gods have no shadows. I know that they do not wink their eyes. They do not perspire. They can stand without touching the ground. Please help me. Show me these signs.'

Now the gods had pity on her and so they did what she asked. Then she saw Nala. She shyly placed a garland round his neck, and thus chose him for her husband. Then Nala was very glad and said to her:

'O Damayanti! before all the gods you have chosen me. I am only a mortal. Yet you loved me. I shall always be true to you. I shall always make you happy.'

The gods then blessed the happy pair, and each of them gave Nala two boons. Indra and Varuna said that he could see them at any time. The others gave him great goodness of heart and they said that when he died he would go to heaven.

Then Nala and Damayanti were married. Not long after they went away to Nishadha. There they were very happy. After some time, two children were born to them, a son called Indrasena, and a daughter called Indrani. Nala ruled his kingdom wisely. All went well.

The gods returned to heaven. On their way they met Dwapara and Kali, the wicked gods. Kali said that he was going to the *swayamvara* to get Damayanti. The gods told him that the *swayamvara* was over. Then Kali was very angry and wanted to curse Nala. The gods said:

'Why do you curse Nala? He chose Damayanti with our full consent. He is a very good man. He has read the Vedas and the Puranas. He never hurts any one. He always tells the

truth. He offers many sacrifices to the gods. He cannot be cursed. Your curses will come back to you. You yourself will be cursed.'

But Kali went on to Nishadha and lived there for some time. Do you know what he wanted ? He desired to get into Nala's body. So he waited for the proper time. One day king Nala was performing a ceremony and while he was doing it he made some mistake or other. This gave Kali the chance and at once he entered Nala's body. Previously Kali had gone to Pushkara, the king's brother, and had asked him to invite Nala for a game of dice with him. Kali promised to help him. Pushkara was assured that he would win the kingdom for himself. So he asked Nala to play at dice. Nala consented. The play began and little by little Nala lost all that he had. When his people heard of this, they were alarmed and wanted him to stop. They sent a message by Damayanti. But Kali was in the king, and so Nala would not speak to Damayanti. He went on playing.

Now Damayanti was not angry with Nala. She knew the king was not himself. She was a very wise woman and had a calm nature. She sent for Varshneya, the king's charioteer. She told him to take the children to Vidarbha. He was to leave them with her parents. Then he could go where he liked. The charioteer did so. After leaving the children, he went to Ayodhya and became the charioteer of King Rituparna. Damayanti also could have

escaped. But she did not wish to do so. She was too true to Nala. She would not leave him in his troubles.

Nala now lost everything; even his clothes and jewels were gone. Only Damayanti was left. Pushkara asked him to stake her also. But Nala would not do so. He had only a single piece of clothing on. He left the city. Damayanti followed him. She also had only one cloth on. Pushkara would not let any of the people help them. They had no food and so they were hungry and thirsty. Nala saw some birds with golden feathers. He took off his garment and threw it on them. He wanted to catch them for their food. But they flew up with the cloth and said in jest:

'We are Kali's friends. We do not want you to have even the cloth.'

Then Nala said to his wife: 'I am your lord. You must listen to me. I speak for your good. What can I do now? I cannot even give you food. There is the road to Vidarbha, to your father's home.'

Then Damayanti said: 'O king! how can I live without you? I can help you to bear your grief. There is no medicine to one sick with grief like a wife. Let me stay with you. How can I leave you alone in the forest? There is the road to Vidarbha. Let us both go there. My father will be kind to us. He will treat you with honour.'

But Nala refused to go. Once before he had gone there in all his glory. How could he go there now? He told his wife that he would not leave her. So he and his wife both tied the one cloth they had round them. They wandered on until at last they came to a small hut where they sat down. Damayanti fell sound asleep. Nala was half-mad with grief. Besides Kali was still in him. He thought to himself:

'What is the use of my acting like this? My wife will never leave me. She is true to me. I must leave her. She may then go to her own people. No one will hurt a good woman. The gods will look after her.'

Then he wanted to tear the cloth into two pieces. But that would wake up his wife. So with a sword, which he found there, he cut the cloth in two. Then he left his poor wife sleeping on the ground and went away. But he came back. He looked at his wife with tears in his eyes. How could she live without him? She loved him so much. She would be so filled with sorrow. Again and again he went; again and again he came back. Kali and love dragged him different ways. At last he prayed to the gods to help her and went away.

CHAPTER II

DAMAYANTI AFTER SEPARATION

DAMAYANTI soon after woke up from her sleep; she could not see Nala anywhere. She cried aloud for him. He had told her that he would not leave her. He had always been true to his word. How had he left her now? Why should he wring her heart in this way? Yet she was not angry with him. She knew he was not quite himself and she was sure that he was half-mad with grief. Her own grief was terrible, but her sorrow was mostly for him. She knew he still loved her. She knew he would not be happy without her. Who would comfort him when he was tired? He was not in his right mind now. He would soon be better and would think of her. Then he would be sorry for leaving her. Who would comfort him then? And what a plight for a great hero like Nala to be in? He had been a king of kings. He had offered great sacrifices. And now he was wandering alone in the forest. Where was all the glory gone? She felt her heart had broken for him. She had no fears for herself. She saw tigers and bears, and many other fearful things. But she knew that nothing could harm a good woman. Her heart, however, longed to see Nala. When would she see him again? How could she live without him? It was better for her to die. What was a wife without her lord? It was all Kali's doing. She cursed Kali.

She wandered about in the forest seeking for Nala. She wept aloud for him. Suddenly she



DAMAYANTI AND THE SERPENT.

came across a gigantic serpent. It twisted itself round her and Damayanti was nearly crushed to death. Even then her sorrow was for her husband; he would remember her; he would weep for her. She felt no sorrow for herself. She was rather glad for herself.

Just then a hunter came to the spot. He saw the serpent crushing Damayanti. He rushed up and cut off the serpent's head and so Damayanti was freed. Then he asked her who she was. She told him all her story. But the hunter's heart was a wicked one. Her beauty captivated him. He wanted her to be his wife. He troubled her much. Then Damayanti grew very angry and said:

'A true wife has much power. I curse this man. If I am true to my lord, let him die.' The hunter at once fell down dead.

Then Damayanti went on. She spent three days and three nights wandering about. She was very hungry and thirsty and tired. At last she came to a pretty hermitage. She saw herds of deers and monkeys. She saw many holy hermits. They welcomed her with sweet words and asked her gently who she was and why she was so sad? Then she told them all her story. They said to her:

'Do not be afraid, fair lady. We are prophets. We know that you will be happy again. We know Nala will get back his kingdom. He will again be a king of kings.'

So saying they all vanished. There was no hermitage there. She wondered greatly.

She went on. Suddenly she saw a large company of merchants with horses and elephants. She went up to them. Being half-mad she looked very strange to them. Some ran away from her in fear. Some thought she was a goddess. The chief of the merchants spoke kindly to her. She told them her story. She said that she was looking for Nala. Had any of them seen him? They said they had not. They were merchants. They were going to the city of the good king Subahu who was the king of the Chedis. Damayanti went along with them.

In the evening they halted on the bank of a river. All went to sleep. Suddenly a herd of wild elephants rushed on them. These elephants trampled on the men and horses and tame elephants. Many were killed. Only a few men were left. Then these few men said to each other: 'Why has this evil come upon us! It must be due to that woman. She was half-mad. She must be a *rakshasi* or a devil. Let us look for her and kill her.'

Damayanti heard these words. In great fear she ran away into the forest. Great was her grief. Was this suffering a punishment for some wrong she had done? She must have sinned in her former life. Else, why all this evil ? She wished she had died. Why had the elephants not killed her ? It was fate. People would die in their proper time.

Thus weeping she went into the city of the Chedis. She had only half a cloth on. She looked so strange. The boys all began to mock her. The king's mother saw her from the palace. She sent her nurse to bring her in. Damayanti was brought in. The queen said to her:

'You are poor. You look mad. Yet your beauty is great. And you are not afraid of the men. They mocked you and yet you were calm. Who are you ?'

Then Damayanti said to her: 'I am a serving-woman. I am of good birth. My husband and I loved each other. But he played at dice and lost everything. He had to go to the forest. I went after him. He was half-mad. One day he left me and went away. I am looking for him.'

The queen asked her to stay in the palace. She would send men out to look for her husband. Damayanti said: 'I shall stay with you, O queen! But no man must trouble me. If any man does, he must be punished. I am willing to do even the meanest work here.'

The queen agreed to this. Then Damayanti became chief maid to the queen's daughter, Sunanda. She was treated with kindness and respect. But Damayanti kept herself in the old sad state. She did not wash the dust off her feet. She did not comb her hair. She was still dressed in the half piece of cloth.

CHAPTER III

THE UGLY BAHUKA.

WHAT happened to Nala? He left Damayanti and went away. Then he saw a great fire in the forest, and from the fire he heard a voice calling him. He went up to the fire and saw a mighty snake lying in the fire. It said to him:

'O Nala! do not be afraid. I am a snake called Karkotaka. The great *rishi*, Narada, has cursed me. He said I would not be able to move, and that only a man called Nala could save me. Carry me out from here and I will help you.'

So Nala took the snake out of the fire. Then the snake asked him to walk on. He took ten steps and at the tenth step the snake bit him. At once Nala's form was changed. Nala became very ugly, but the snake said to him:

'Do not be surprised, O king! I have taken away your beauty, but it is for your good. People will not know you are Nala. Kali is living in you, and my poison will make him suffer much pain. As long as he is in you, he will be in pain, but you yourself will have no pain. Go to Ayodhya to king Rituparna. Tell him you are a charioteer, and that you are an expert in horse driving. Rituparna is very clever at dice. You teach him about horses and he will give you his skill at dice. He will be your friend. Do not be afraid. You

will get back your kingdom, as well as your wife and children. When you want back your own form, think of me. Then put round you this cloth which I give you, and at once you will become Nala again.'

So saying, the snake gave Nala a piece of cloth. Then he disappeared.

Nala went to king Rituparna. He told him that his name was Bahuka, and that he was very clever with horses. He said that he was a good cook also. Then the king made Nala the chief officer in charge of the horses. Nala had Varshneya and Jivala under him, You remember Varshneya was Nala's own charioteer. But now he did not know Nala. Night after night Nala thought of Damayanti. He used to cry aloud about her every evening. One day Jivala heard him and asked him why he was crying. Nala said: 'There was once a man who had a good wife. He was in trouble, but his wife did not leave him. She followed him into the forest. But the man was not true to her. He left her in the wild woods. The man is safe and has found good employment. Yet he cannot forget his wife and is always thinking of her. Where is she now?'

CHAPTER IV.

'THE REMARRIAGE'

Now Damayanti's father sent people to search for her and her husband. They looked for them in many places. At last a Brahmana named Sudeva came to the country of the Chedis. He saw Damayanti in the palace of the queen. So he went to her and told her that her parents were keeping well and that they had sent people to look for her. Then Damayanti began to weep. Sunanda told this to her mother. Then the queen came to Sudeva, and asked him who Damayanti really was. He told her all her story, and said:

'She used to have a birth-mark like a lotus between the eye-brows.'

Sunanda then washed the dust from Damayanti's forehead. The birth-mark was seen. Then the queen began to weep and said to Damayanti:

'Your mother and mine are sisters. My house is yours. All that I have is yours.'

Damayanti said: 'You have always been kind to me. I was your servant, yet you treated me well. I would gladly stay here, but my children are with my father. I must go to them.'

So Damayanti took leave of the queen and went to her parents. They were very glad to see her again. But Damayanti was not happy.

She still dressed herself in the same sad way as before. She told her mother that she wanted to find Nala. Without him she could not live. You see how true she was to her husband. She could have lived in comfort in her father's house. Nala had wronged her and had been unkind to her. Yet she forgave him. He had left her. Yet she was not ashamed to seek for him. And why? Because she understood him. Husbands do not leave their wives unless their wives are wicked. That is what many women think. But Damayanti knew that this was not why Nala had left her. She knew that she had done no wrong, and that Nala never thought that she had done wrong. She was sure of that. She knew that Nala still loved her. What a noble-hearted woman she was!

So king Bhima sent people to look for Nala. Damayanti told them to say these words in every country:

'O dear gambler! Where have you gone? You left your dear wife in the forest. She is still clothed in half a piece of cloth. She is full of grief. She is waiting for you. Be kind to her and come back. Her luck is all gone.'

They were to proclaim this in every town, but they were not to mention Damayanti's name. Then they were to come back and tell her the answers they had received.

One of these messengers named Parnada came back and said to Damayanti: 'I went into the city of Rituparna. There I spoke the words you had asked me to say. Then the charioteer of the king, who was called Bahuka and who was very ugly and had short arms, said to me:

'Good women never get into trouble; so their husbands may leave them without fear. Such wives are always good and go to heaven. Good women, therefore, never get angry with their husbands for leaving them. The man who left this woman was in great trouble. So she should not be angry with him.'

Then Damayanti told Sudeva to go to Rituparna's kingdom. Sudeva was to say to Rituparna:

'Damayanti is going to hold another *Swayamvara*, for she does not know if Nala is alive or not. The *Swayamvara* will be held to-morrow morning. You must try and be there. Do not delay, the time is short.'

King Rituparna heard these words. He told Nala to get his chariot ready. Then Nala was much grieved and thought to himself: 'Damayanti is very cruel. Perhaps she is half-mad with sorrow. She must be out of her mind and that is why she is doing this wicked thing. Perhaps she is doing this for my sake. Or

has she got tired of waiting for me? No, Damayanti will never be tired of waiting for me. She is too good. She is full of grief for me. She is the mother of my children, and will be true to me. I shall go and see what the matter is.'

So Nala chose fast horses and drove Rituparna in his chariot. He drove it very quickly, for he was a good driver. Varshneya, the old chariot-driver of Nala, was in the chariot and he thought to himself:

'This must surely be Nala. No one else can drive the horses so well. This man is of the same age as Nala; but he is not like Nala. That need not trouble me, for Nala may have changed his appearance. I think it must be Nala.'

And still they drove on. On the way, Rituparna showed Nala a very clever thing. He showed him that he could count the leaves and fruits of a tree by looking at it. Nala wondered at his skill, and as he knew that Rituparna was also clever at dice, he asked Rituparna to give him his skill. He said that in return he would teach Rituparna to manage horses: Rituparna agreed and taught him all about the dice.

As soon as this was done Kali came out of Nala. He was in great pain. The snake's

poison was in him and Damayanti's curse troubled him. Nala was very angry with him, but Kali spoke humbly to him and begged his pardon. Then he disappeared. Rituparna had not seen Kali and Nala did not yet take his own form. So Rituparna did not know that his charioteer was Nala.

They went on and at last entered Vidarbha. The roar of the car was very loud. When Damayanti heard it, she knew that only Nala could drive like that. She was sure he had come. The horses of Nala also heard the sound and showed their joy, for they knew Nala's driving.

Then Rituparna went into Bhima's court and was gladly received by Bhima. Bhima asked him why he came. Rituparna looked around. There was no other king there. Where was the *swayamvara*? There was none. Now Rituparna was a clever king. He said nothing about the *swayamvara*, but told Bhima that he had come only to see him. Bhima did not quite believe this, but he was very kind to Rituparna. Bahuka took the horses to the stables, and gave them food and drink. Then he sat down by the car.

But Damayanti saw no Nala. She was very disappointed. She said to herself: 'If Nala does not come, I shall surely kill myself. I cannot live without him.' She called a maid called Kecini to her and said:

'Go and see the charioteer. Find out who he is. I think it must be Nala. My heart seems to know him. It feels very happy.'

So Kecini came to Bahuka. He told her that he was the charioteer of Rituparna, that Rituparna had come for the *swayamvara*, and that he had driven the chariot. Then Kecini repeated to him the words taught to Parnada by Damayanti :

'O beloved gambler ! Take pity on your wife and come back to her. She is waiting for you. Why did you leave her ?'

Nala answered in the same way as before :

'Good women are never angry with their husbands for leaving them. This woman should not be angry. For her husband was in great trouble.'

Then he began to weep. Kecini told this to Damayanti. Now Damayanti was sure that Bahuka must be Nala. She told Kecini again to watch Nala. She did so. Then she came back and said :

'O Damayanti ! Wonderful things have happened. The charioteer can easily enter low places without stooping. The entrances themselves became high for him. Vessels fill themselves with water for him. He holds grass up and fire comes out of it. He touches flowers and they get a better colour and a better smell.'

Damayanti knew from such things that the charioteer must be Nala. She sent Kecini to get food cooked by Nala. Kecini did so. It was just like Nala's cooking. Then she was sure Bahuka was Nala. She sent her children to him. Nala knew them and began to weep over them.

Then Damayanti sent for her mother. She told her that Bahuka must be Nala. But she must examine him. He must be brought to the palace. So Bahuka was brought in. She was very sorry to see him in the state in which he was. He also was very sorry to see Damayanti in the state in which she was, for she was still covered with dust and dirt. She said to him :

'O Bahuka ! have you ever heard of a man leaving his wife ? Only Nala could go away thus. What wrong did I do to him ? Why did he leave me ? He told me he would be true to me. He broke his vow.'

Then he said to her : 'O Damayanti ! All this was the doing of Kali. He entered into me, and I was not myself. But now I have defeated him and he has left me. I have come here only for you. But, O lady ! How can a woman choose a second husband ? You sent word to Rituparna about a *swayamvara*. That is why he came here.'

Then she said: 'King! You should never think evil of me. Did I not refuse to marry any of the gods? Did I not choose you? I sent Parnada to the city of Rituparna and he brought back your answer. Then I thought of this plan to get you. I knew Rituparna's city was far from here. So I gave him only one day's time. I knew that only you could bring him here in one day. Only you could drive so fast. That is why I sent word to Rituparna. I have always been true to you. I pray the gods to tell you so.'

Then the wind god's voice was heard:

'O king! She has done you no wrong. This was planned only to get you. She is yours. You are hers.'

We see Damayanti's courage here. In those days a woman must not behave boldly and yet Damayanti was not afraid to do a. bold thing. She wanted Nala, and would do anything to get him. She was not ashamed of acting boldly, for she knew she was doing right. Her strong love made her do all this. She was always true to her husband. When Nala heard what she said he was greatly pleased. Then he thought of the snake Karkotaka, and put round him the cloth given by him. At once his old handsome form came back to him. And so he and his wife and children were happy together again.

The kings, Bhima and Rituparna, were very glad at all this. Rituparna asked Nala to forgive him for making him work as a charioteer. Nala thanked him for his kindness. Then Nala and Damayanti went to Nishadha. Nala asked Pushkara to play again with him and Pushkara did so. Nala won the game and got back all his kingdom and money. Pushkara himself was very glad at this. His old bad behaviour was not his fault. He had acted badly only at the order of Kali. Kali's power was gone, so Nala forgave him. He gave him a portion of the kingdom, and sent him away in peace.

Then Nala and Damayanti and their children lived happily together in Nishadha.

ORAL AND WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. Write sentences in the form of questions about each of the following:—Swan—The Gods—Kali—Pushkara—The Hunter—The Hermits—Wild Elephants—The Queen of the Chedis—Bahuka—Rituparna—Kecini.
2. Use the following words in sentences of your own:—Wring—Ring; Scene—Seen; Scent--Sent; Praise—Prays; One—Won; Fair—Fare; Dear—Deer: Prey—Pray; Quiet—Quite.
3. Describe in your own words why Nala left Damayanti in the forest and went his own way.
4. Tell in a few simple sentences what troubles Damayanti had when she went about in search of her husband in the forest.
5. Write in your own words in the form of a dialogue the conversation between Damayanti and Queen of the Chedis.
6. Tell in your own words the story of the second *Swayamvara* of Damayanti.

G. R. C. PRESS, G. T., MADRAS—7-'23—10 M.